THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Government has not introduced any classification of low cost airlines and as such there is no distinction in the policy for such airlines.

Policy for developing new airports

916. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the policy in developing new airports and upgrading the existing airports in the country and how do we compare with leading countries on this aspect;

(b) what is the present state of affairs of the major airports in the country in the wake of heavy inflow of air passengers;

(c) whether it is a fact that the existing infrastructure is no where near to meet the demands of crowded passengers; and

(d) whether there was not an earlier survey/study to gauge this kind of inflow of passengers and the reasons for it was not gauged and advance action taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Government of India has a "Policy on Airport Infrastructure" issued in 1997, which specifies the modalities for setting up of new Greenfiled airports with Private Sector participation. As regards the policy for upgrading existing airports, these are taken up based on factors such as traffic growth, availability of funds, availability of sufficient land, economic viability, etc.

(b) to (d) AAI monitors the capacity of airport *vis-a-vis* demand through Normative Planning/capacity Measurement Surveys and short term, medium term and long term forecast on a regular basis, which forms the basis for capacity augmentation measures. However, the unprecendented growth of past three years has posed a challenge to airport infrastructure. A few airports such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Pune etc. are saturated.

Government have taken measures to augment capacity as a result of which, additional capacity to handle 601.05 lakh passengers per annum on domestic sector and 301.80 lakh passengers per annum on international sector is under construction. This additional capacity is likely to be commissioned within next 2-3 years and is expected to ease the situation.

Congestion at metro airports

917. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to steep rise in air traffic there is a congestion of air traffic in all metro airports;

(b) whether it is also a fact that due to lack of infrastructure facilities in the airports, amenities provided to the passengers are also inadequate;

(c) if so, the details of guidelines and procedures followed for permitting new airlines operators to the metro airports; and

(d) if so, the measures taken by Government to relieve congestion of air traffic and improve the passengers amenities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The unprecedented growth in air traffic, during the past three years, has posed a challenge to air infrastructure. This has led to congestion in air space and terminal capacity constraints, during peak hours, specially at Delhi and Mumbai airports.

(c) and (d) New flights are permitted subject to availability of air side capacity and requisite terminal capacity. Attempts have also been made to spread out the peak hour traffic to non-peak hours. Further, various measures have been taken to remove the congestion at airports such as construction of high speed exit taxiways and parallel taxi-tracks, upgradation and improvement of ATC infrastrucjure, expansion and modernization of terminals, etc.

Shifting of headquarters of Jet-Sahara Airlines

918. SHRI B.K. HARTPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the newly formed Jet-Sahara combine is planning to shift their corporate headquarters from India to UK and also their world operational headquarters to Brussels; and

(b) if so, whether such a move is prompted by apprehensions prevailing in private civil aviation sector of the slow pace of modernization of Indian airports delaying the completion schedule much beyond the targeted 2010?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Government is not aware of any such plan by Jet Airways.

(b) Does not arise.

Merger of Air India Express and Alliance Air

919. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is possibility of merger between Air India Express and Alliance Air; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India Express and Alliance Air are operated by the subsidiary companies of Air India and Indian Airlines respectively. Air India Express is planning to commence domestic operations in addition to the international operations. A decision has already been taken by the Government to merge Air India and Indian Airlines into a new company.